



Volume 3, Issue 10
November
 2004

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OAPIA NEWSLETTER

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Access Granted



Washington, D.C. has seen an influx of immigrants over the past decade. As a result of this trend, the District of Columbia has also experienced an increase in the population of speak-

ers that are considered Limited English Proficient or LEP.

According to a recent Brookings report, the LEP population increased nearly eighty percent over the last decade in the Washington metropolitan area. Of the total LEP population in the metropolitan area, twenty-five percent speak an Asian and Pacific Island language. The top three Asian languages most spoken by the LEP population are Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese. Many of these immigrants are unable to access services because of their limited English language abilities.

Community leaders recognized this inequity in services offered to the immigrant population and initiated a campaign to rectify this inadequate level of services to LEP populations.

The D.C. Language Access Coalition, a broad-based partnership of community groups representing the African, Asian, and Latino communi-

ties, worked relentlessly to pass this legislation. Finally, on Wednesday April 21, 2004, Mayor Anthony A. Williams signed into law the Language Access Act (LAA). The District of Columbia is the third city in the nation after Oakland, California and New York City to enact similar language access legislation.

Central to the Act is providing equal access to all citizens of the District of Columbia. It requires that District government



The Mayor signs the Language Access Act into law on April 21, 2004.

programs, departments, and services assess the need for, and offer, oral language services; provide written translations of documents into any

non-English language spoken by the LEP population that constitutes three percent or 500 individuals, whichever is less, of the population served or encountered, or likely to be served or encountered. The Office of Human Rights (OHR) has oversight of this Act and recently hired a Language Access Director to coordinate and supervise District government programs, departments and services in complying with the provisions of the Act.



The following agencies or "covered entities" will be phased into complying with the act:

Access Granted Continued

The Act expressly cites that it applies on its effective date to:

- * Department of Health
- * Department of Human Service
- * Department of Employment Services
- * Metropolitan Police Department
- * DC Public Schools
- * Office of Planning
- * Fire and Emergency Medical Services
- * Office of Human Rights



other agencies through regulation after consultation with the D.C. Language Access Coalition. The Act is applicable to all DC government agencies or “covered entities,” include DC Courts as of October 1, 2006.

The Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) and the office on Latino Offices (OLA) were involved with this Act from the early stages. Recently, **OAPIA** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OHR and OLA outlining the partnership between the three agencies in implementing the LAA. **OAPIA** will serve as a consultative body to OHR supporting the Language Access Director in the areas of data collection, outreach, quality control, and the hiring of bilingual public contact personnel and multicultural sensitivity training.

In the initial stages of this MOU, **OAPIA** has concentrated its efforts in the Outreach component, and has met with agencies to develop tangible first steps toward a comprehensive outreach plan. The next steps will be to initiate a community needs assessment and address the quality control of translated documents. **OAPIA** will oversee and house all translated documents in Asian languages and check for accuracy and reading ease.

The Language Access Act is an important step in creating a government that provides equal access to all its citizens. The community, government agencies, **OAPIA**, OLA and OHR all play an integral role in providing this access. The success of the implementation of the LAA in Washington, D.C. will serve as a model for other cities to follow, creating equal access across the country.

The LAA shall also apply as of October 1, 2004, to:

- * Department of Housing and Community Development
- * Department of Mental Health
- * Department of Motor Vehicles
- * Child and Family Services Agency
- * Alcohol Beverage Regulatory Administration
- * Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs

The LAA shall accordingly apply as of October 1, 2005, to:

- * Department of Parks and Recreation
- * Office of Aging
- * DC Public Library
- * Office of Personnel
- * Office of Contracting and Procurement
- * Department of Corrections
- * Department of Public Works
- * Office of Tax and Revenue



In addition to these covered entities, the Language Access Director may designate

Mayor's Trip Overseas



From October 14 through October 24, Mayor Anthony A. Williams and five members of the DC Council, as well as senior executives from the Administration (including **OAPIA**'s Director, Greg Chen), local businesspeople and community leaders, traveled to Asia in furtherance of two Sister City agreements between the District of Colum-

Mayor William meets with the Mayor of Shanghai, Han Zhang, at the Municipal Government Hall on October 20.



Mayor's Trip Overseas Continued



bia and Beijing and Bangkok, respectively.

One of the missions of this trip was to enhance the "Sister City" agreements with Beijing and Bangkok. To that end, the following is what the delegation and the Asian hosts agreed to do:

- Work with Chinese business people about investments on the Anacostia River.
- Link www.dc.gov with the websites for Beijing and Bangkok.
- Plan a staff exchange to discuss security preparedness and crisis management for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.
- Explore the development of a trade and cultural center for DC and Beijing.
- Work with the State Department and the US Embassy in China to assist to improve the process of getting VISAS for visitors and students, to increase tourism and study between China and Washington,



Local band welcomes the District Delegation during a luncheon sponsored by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration on October 22, 2004.

D.C.

- Discussion about a direct flight from Washington, D.C. to Beijing or Shanghai, to eliminate travel through New York, Chicago or San Francisco—and encourage tourism from the East.
- In Shanghai, the delegation met with Maryland Governor Ehrlich and his staff, who were in China to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Maryland's Business Office in Shanghai. They talked about the possibility of sharing office space for a D.C. business development office.



Mayor Williams meets with Madam He Luli, Vice-Chair, Standing Committee of National People's Congress.

In all, the Mayor considered the trip a success as it lead to continued cooperation with our friends in Asia and improved business ties that will benefit both sides. He also extended an invitation for Mayor Han of Shanghai and Governor Apirak of Bangkok to visit Washington, D.C. and hoped to play host to them soon.

Funding & Resources

❑ Health Disparities Among Minority and Underserved Women. *The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)* announces funds to stimulate research aimed at reducing health disparities among racial/ethnic minority and underserved women. This initiative seeks not only research, but also intervention studies that show promise for improving the health profile of underserved women.

Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, busi-

nesses, institutions of higher learning, state and local governments, public housing authorities, and independent school districts. There are multiple deadline dates. For further information, contact Yvonne Bryan, PhD, RN at 301-594-6908 or bryany@mail.nih.gov; or go to:

<http://www.grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-04-153.html>.

❑ Education, Culture, and Social Issues. *Cingular* supports educational, cultural, and social issues affecting the quality of life in the

communities where its employees work and live. Emphasis is given to programs that inspire creativity in youth and adults and that stimulate collaborative partnerships among various organizations. Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations. There are no deadlines for applications. For further information, go to:

http://www.cingular.com/about/community_involvement.

❑ Training Scholarships. *The Foundation Center (FC)* is an eTraining Partner with the Verizon

Funding & Resources Continued

Foundation. This means that you can now apply to the Verizon Foundation for a scholarship to attend any of FC's nine full-day courses on proposal writing, proposal budgeting, nonprofit boards and fundraising, researching and evaluating funding prospects, and more. Please note that registration for FC courses is a separate process from applying for a Verizon Foundation scholarship. For further information on courses, dates, and locations, go to: http://fdncenter.org/marketplace/catalog/subcategory_training_city.jhtml?id=cat170002. Click on the Scholarship Information link for scholarship details.

❑ Grants Information Resource Center (GIRC).

The Mayor's Office of Partnerships and Grants Development (OPGD) provides assistance to nonprofit and government representatives through a resource center at One Judiciary Square, 441 4th Street, NW, Suite 200 South.

The primary focus of the GIRC is to assist emerging and small nonprofits that either lack computer access or the knowledge to best use their existing computer technology to identify grant, capacity building, and other related resource information online. Featured in the GIRC are four workstations with funding research data-

bases and access to the Internet. The Center also has a small library of printed materials. Access to the GIRC is free of charge but requires an appointment. Call 202-727-8900 to schedule an appointment.

❑ **Citywide Calendar.** *The Government of the District of Columbia's* Citywide Calendar is an online tool that lists some of the local events likely to be of interest to DC residents, businesses, and visitors. Events include those sponsored by the Government of the District of Columbia, as well as local organizations. For further information on how to view or post events, go to: <http://app.calendar.rrc.dc.gov/>



APAICS Announces 2005 Summer Internship Program

The Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS) has issued applications for its 2005 undergraduate Summer Internship Program.

Every year, APAICS selects ten to twelve undergraduate students for a first-hand learning experience in American politics. Interns work in congressional offices, federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations in Washington, DC. Through a series of seminars, interns learn about national Asian Pacific Islander American advocacy organizations and network with peers from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

Interns receive a stipend of \$2500 for the period from June 6 to July 29, 2005. The inter come from all regions of the country and from private as well as public institutions. Each group of interns reflects the ethnic diversity of the Asian Pacific

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Islander American community. Applicants must demonstrate an interest in public service and Asian Pacific Islander American affairs.

Undergraduates, including those graduating in spring 2005, are eligible. The deadline is January 30, 2005. Applications can be downloaded from the APAICS website at www.apaics.org. Call 202-296-9200 or e-mail apaics@apaics.org for more information.



Grantmakers and Donors Are Looking for You!

Guidestar, the national database of nonprofit information, is used by many donors and grantmakers to research nonprofit organizations before they give money to them. Let these funders know more about your good work by adding information to your basic IRS listing through the GuideStar Information Form (GIF). This free on-line form allows you to add/update your nonprofit's information on the Guidestar website. For further information, go to: <http://www.guidestar.org/npo/index.jsp>.

